

Hemingway, Trauma, and Power

Research Thesis

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for graduation *with research distinction* in English in the undergraduate colleges of The Ohio State University

by

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April 2013

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Introduction

Ernest Hemingway is widely regarded as one of the finest authors of our time, and his novels have been applauded and critiqued around the world. One of the long standing critiques of Hemingway stems from his portrayal of women throughout his works. Even though a number of critics, including feminist critics, have argued since the 1970s that Hemingway writes about gender complexly, many in the literary world still consider him to be openly misogynistic in not only his writings, but his personal behavior as well. I would like to combat this portrayal of Hemingway with my analysis of three of his most beloved novels: *A Farewell to Arms* (1929), *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1940), and *The Garden of Eden* (posthumously published in 1986). All of these novels portray women who have experienced a form of trauma – often violent. The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders defines psychological trauma as, “direct personal experience of an event that involves actual or threatened death or serious injury or other threat to one’s physical integrity’ or witnessing an event that involves death, injury or a threat to the physical integrity of

another person; or learning about unexpected or violent death, serious harm, or threat" (Criterion A1), and such a condition is present in all of these central characters. Yet, these women are presented as resilient and brave, and thus dispel the theory that Hemingway purposely created unsympathetic female characters. These women become survivors, often emotionally stronger than their male counterparts. In addition to having strong female characters, all of these novels take place in different parts of the world and feature characters with differing nationalities which adds to the ways these women are powerful and complex. Thus, I also plan to argue that Hemingway did not create misogynistic environments out of a personal hatred for women but instead was simply reconstructing the environments that these women were living in at various times and places. When re-examining these novels through a historical lens, it is clear that Hemingway was not a misogynist. By referring to the historical work of Julie Goodspeed-Chadwick, Jamie Barlowe, Wendy Martin, and others, I will claim that Hemingway drew portraits of strong and diverse female characters in three key novels. My argument will add to the current debate centered around Hemingway's female characters by suggesting that emotional and physical duress has not weakened these characters but constructed them as strong.

Catherine Barkley in *A Farewell to Arms* is a British nurse serving during World War I. She is consistently surrounded by trauma by caring for severely wounded soldiers. Previous to Catherine's appearance in the novel, the reader learns that she has undergone the loss of her fiancé. When Catherine first meets Frederic Henry, she tells him the story of losing her fiancé, making clear that this

loss has proved monumental to her. Catherine also continues to carry around her fiancé's riding crop, a constant reminder of the loss she has endured. When she and Frederic first meet they have the following conversation,

“ ‘Were you there?’ ‘No.’ ‘I’ve heard about it,’ she said. ‘There’s not really any war of that sort down here. They sent me the little stick. His mother sent it to me. They returned it with his things’ ‘Had you been engaged long?’ ‘Eight years. We grew up together.’ ‘And why didn’t you marry?’ ‘I don’t know,’ she said. ‘I was a fool not to. I could not have given him that anyway. But I thought it would be bad for him’ ” (16). Catherine’s fiancé’s death has clearly affected Catherine as she claims not to love. This effect can clearly be seen as traumatic to her because she is not able to reconcile her feelings about her fiancé’s death and evolve past this trauma. This initial trauma that Catherine experiences is the catalyst for her re-traumatization as related to the male protagonist of the story, the American Frederic Henry. Catherine falls in love with Frederic, caring for him after he becomes critically injured in the war. Besides taking care of his wounds, she is subjected to Frederic’s alcoholism as well as his desertion of the war. Catherine also experiences emotional trauma, as she refers to herself as “crazy,” as well as physical trauma through her pregnancy. Catherine remains stoic throughout her life which ultimately ends when she gives birth to her and Frederic’s child. Catherine is often disparaged for her willingness to conform to traditional patterns of domesticity, yet it was her domesticity that led to her death. It can thus be implied that Hemingway did not laud submissive women but warned against it. Catherine is however also depicted as a survivor because not only does she care for Frederic, but she does this while

being pregnant.. My argument for Catherine as a resilient figure will focus around the trauma her body receives through the pregnancy as well as the trauma experienced through Frederic's alcoholism and caring for his physical wounds as a re-traumatization from the earlier loss of her fiancé.

Maria in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* is the survivor of an extremely violent rape. She has also been publicly humiliated by having her hair brutally cut off. Maria begins a relationship with Robert Jordan, an American soldier fighting in the Spanish Civil War. Maria and Robert enter into a relationship that crosses racial and national lines. As a survivor, Maria not only heals herself, but has a profound effect on healing Robert as well. Before their union, Robert is unattached and unemotional. It is Maria's resiliency that allows Robert to become more emotionally open. Maria also demonstrates strength through her sexual relationship with Robert. She is able to engage in a relationship with him even though she suffered a violent encounter. While examining Maria's character it is also important to consider the conditions she likely experienced as a woman in Spain. The feminist movement in Spain had begun prior to the Spanish Civil War with the creation of the 1931 Spanish Constitution; therefore, it becomes even more poignant that she showed resiliency in the wake of a male-dominated society. Beginning with the Second Republic in 1931, women were granted several important rights in Spain including divorce, the right to an abortion, and the right to vote. However, when The Second Republic began to fall early in 1936, the feminist movement was sidelined during the violent Spanish Civil War that had just started. Maria's character represents the strength in the early feminist movement in Spain. My argument regarding Maria will focus on

her survival as a rape victim, as well as her ability to live through a violent war while radiating compassion towards Robert.

Catherine Bourne in *The Garden of Eden* is arguably the most complex female character that Hemingway portrays in the three novels I will discuss. Catherine desires a male identity when engaging in a sexual relationship with her new husband David Bourne. By portraying a gender-reversal between Catherine and David, Hemingway allows a female character to escape the typical trope of women in domestic spaces. Hemingway creates a dominant character in Catherine and a female character who is not constrained by dominant feminine ideologies. Catherine laments getting her period and is constantly struggling to accept her gender/sex difference. Again, Hemingway rallies against the model of domesticity by having Catherine Bourne experience trauma intrinsically related to her marriage. I will argue that Catherine was a self-sufficient individual that lost her sense of self only when her husband made her feel shame about her desired sexual activities, and that her trauma appeared when her sexual relationship with David made her feel vile from David's own reaction.

The Wound of War in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*

Published in 1940, *For Whom the Bell Tolls* is considered one of Hemingway's greatest accomplishments, capturing the essence of the Spanish Civil War and the entangled relationships that ensued. The central relationship to this war memoir is between the American, Robert Jordan and a young Spanish woman, Maria. Hemingway constructs the characters of Maria and Robert Jordan in intrinsic ways

that both affirm and deny heteronormative ideologies about gender as the novel progresses. Hemingway sets the tone for his gender construction in the novel by beginning his introduction of Maria with a focus on her short hair. Maria's cropped haircut is a result of a violent attack by the Fascists that the Guerilla Spaniards are fighting against in the Civil War. Jordan states, "She'd be beautiful if they hadn't cropped her hair" (13). Hemingway's portrayal of Jordan reveals that he possesses normative ideas about femininity; however, this view is overturned when he learns of the trauma that Maria has experienced. "'It was shaved,' she said, 'They shaved it regularly in the prison at Valladolid. It has taken three months to grow to this. I was on the train. They were taking me to the South. Many of the prisoners were caught after the train was blown up but I was not. I came with these'" (14). Maria speaks of her trauma lucidly, as well as with a distant realism, making it clear that she was lucky to lose only her hair, and not her life. This is common in trauma victims, "Such a disassociation as a vital defense mechanism in response to crisis" (Schaffner 67). Maria and her fellow comrades view the loss of Maria's hair as unfortunate. Coupled with the rape we later learn that Maria has experienced, Hemingway has clearly placed Maria into a category of traumatized, damaged "goods." Maria's status of damaged and traumatized progresses to that of enlightened throughout the novel, as her relationship with Robert Jordan deepens. Maria and Robert Jordan enter into a sexual relationship both desiring the other, which helps them to overcome the present-day trauma they have experienced.

When Robert Jordan and Maria first become intimate, Maria's explanation and reasoning of her gang rape becomes tied to him as she reasons that he will not

love her because she is not a virgin. “ ‘Hast thou loved others?’ ‘Never.’ Then suddenly, going dead in his arms, ‘But things were done to me.’ ‘By whom?’ ‘By various.’ Now she lay perfectly quietly and as though her body were dead and turned her head away from him. ‘Now you will not love me.’ ‘I love you,’ he said. But something had happened to him and she knew it” (40). Jordan then becomes not only her lover, but her teacher and sympathizer as well. Maria enlists Jordan as someone who will help her become connected to her sexual identity. Thus, Maria gains agency through Robert because she is cognizant of the fact that her only experience with sex is through violence. By acknowledging not only her victim status, but the tools she needs to acquire to become a sexual agent, she regains her status as a fully actualized woman. The beginning scene of their relationship is also important because Hemingway combines sex and violence in several ways. Maria not only relives her rape through her experience with Jordan, but she mistakes Jordan’s pistol for an erection, reminding the reader that her only experience with sex is through violence. “‘No,’ he said and laughed. ‘Do not be afraid. That is the pistol.’ He lifted it and slipped it behind him. ‘I am ashamed,’ she said, her face away from him” (39).. Hemingway reminds the reader that it will be impossible for Maria to have sex with Robert without thinking of her previous attack. But just as she must relive her rape, she overcomes it by having sex with him.

Maria’s rape and subsequent survival is important when placed historically within the actual feminist movement occurring in Spain. The Spanish Civil War occurred from 1936-1939. Prior to this, Spain updated their Constitution with their 1931 Spanish Constitution. This document provided several landmark policies that

protected and advocated for women. The Spanish Constitution, approved in December of 1931 provided clear laws regarding women's suffrage, marriage, and divorce. However, this document was created by the Second Spanish Republic, the government institution that was defeated in the Spanish Civil War by the rebel group led by Francisco Franco. Maria and Robert Jordan are fighting on the side of the Republic, which makes her attack more poignant. The rebel group opposed much of the legislation created by the Republic which could include that of the women's suffrage movement.

Similar to his portrayal of Catherine and David in *The Garden of Eden*, Hemingway constructs a relationship that where each partner seems to combine both male and female characteristics. Although this is done primarily through physical appearance and sexual roleplay in *The Garden of Eden*, in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* it is done through an emotional bond shared by Robert Jordan and Maria. "But we will be one now and there will never be a separate one." Then she said, "I will be thee when thou art not there. Oh, I love thee so and I must care well for thee" (143). Maria's wish to join with Robert is a direct result of the trauma she has faced and the desire she has to transcend it. Maria views her relationship with Robert as her chance to overcome her trauma and live healthily.. Maria and Robert's relationship is also significant because there is no sanctity of marriage within their coupling. Maria and Robert do not feel the need to be constrained by marriage to engage in a romantic and sexual relationship. Their sexual relationship is exemplary of the new beginning of women in Spain, who had recently achieved suffrage. Because of the lack of traditional marriage within *For Whom the Bell Tolls* it can be

argued that Hemingway is creating a separation between female characters and the domestic space, similar to what he does in *A Farewell to Arms* as well.

Maria differs from Catherine Barkley because she is fully entrenched in the war effort. Catherine experiences trauma through the war as an outsider – following the death of her fiancée and the subsequent care of wounded soldiers. Maria is raped and brutalized because of her direct involvement in the Spanish Civil War. By creating a female character that not only is capable of fighting but of surviving attacks, Hemingway is making claims about the physical and emotional abilities of women. Maria's rape has historical significance when considered within the feminist framework of the time in Spain. Because rape is considered a violent act of power, Maria's rape is an example of the dominant male class in Spain asserting their power over the newly empowered women in Spain. Some may argue that Maria's strength is undercut by her heavy reliance on Robert Jordan, but her reliance is simply added on top of her resilience before she even met and engaged in a relationship with him. As Anselmo said, " 'When we picked the girl up at the time of the train she was very strange,' Rafael said. 'She would not speak and she cried all the time and if any one touched her she would shiver like a wet dog. Only lately she has been better. Lately she has been much better. Today she was fine'" (17). Although not explicitly said, it is implied to the reader that Maria was on the road to recovery before her relationship with Jordan.

Besides the character of Maria, the other strong female character in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* is Pilar, who is often described as much stronger than the men.

“Something barbarous, the gypsy grinned. Something very barbarous. If you think Pablo is ugly you should see his woman. But brave. A hundred times braver than Pablo. But something barbarous” (15). This portrayal of Pilar is important because Hemingway once again is constructing strength with an unfeminine appearance. Just as Maria is introduced as ugly because of the brutality she has experienced, Pilar is considered strong because of her unattractiveness and barbarian behavior. Because of Hemingway’s character construction of not just of Maria but of Pilar, it is clear that he desired strong female characters. Hemingway’s insistence of placing women in violent situations also affirms his belief that women can not only live through trauma, but they can recover as well.

Robert Jordan’s pet name of “Rabbit” for Maria is another important aspect in Hemingway’s construction of gender. Rabbits are known for their docile bodies, as well as their quickness to fear. Jordan uses this nickname for Maria in the beginning of their sexual relationship, signaling that he is aware of her fear of men. “Get in, little rabbit’, he said and kissed her on the back of the neck. ‘I am afraid.’ ‘No. Do not be afraid. Get in’ “ (39). Maria readily admits to Jordan that she is afraid and Hemingway’s comparison of her to a rabbit furthers his play with gender. Although this nickname originated from Maria’s trauma and fear, this name becomes more ambiguous as their relationship progresses. Maria not only gains more agency as a sexual being, but she loses her fear of physical intimacy.

Similar to Frederic Henry in *A Farewell to Arms*, Robert Jordan is seemingly suffering from alcoholism. “What drink is that?” the gypsy asked. A medicine, Robert

Jordan said. It cures everything. If you have anything wrong this will cure it" (29). Although not explicitly stated, Jordan's reference to alcohol as a "cure all" suggests that he is using alcohol to help deal with damaging psychological effects of being a soldier. Maria becomes Jordan's caregiver, consoling him through the trials and tribulations of war. Sex replaces Jordan's dependence on alcohol, and thus it can be theorized that Maria and Jordan's sexual relationship is positive for them both. Because Jordan and Maria speak as if they are one person, it is not just Maria but Jordan as well who uses their relationship to overcome anxiety due to the war. This further leads to the strong character portrayal of Maria because the trope throughout literature is thought to be that men save the women; however, Maria not only heals herself but her lover as well which is an attribute normally reserved for men in 20th-century American fiction.

For Whom the Bell Tolls is a prime example of how Hemingway created female characters that not only lived and experienced violence, but were able to overcome the trauma that they experienced. Hemingway consistently plays with gender in his physical construction of Maria and through the emotional desires of both Robert Jordan and Maria through their desire to conform to one soul and body. It is through these actions that Hemingway makes strong statements about the ability of women in wartime and their important role in relationships. Finally, through the sexual relationship that Maria and Jordan engage in, Maria is able to realize her full agency and to recover from the brutal rape she experienced before meeting Jordan. Hemingway has his female characters in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* not only heal the male characters, but in the case of Pilar, protect them.

The Wound of Domesticity in *A Farewell to Arms*

In Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms*, the relationship between nurse Catherine Barkley and American soldier Frederic Henry is the primary focus of the novel. However this romantic relationship proves traumatic to Catherine in several ways. At the beginning of the novel, the reader learns that Catherine's original fiancé has been killed, and it is through her work as a nurse that she is reclaiming the identity of her soldier lover. Catherine has been traumatized through the death of her fiancé, and it is when Catherine pursues her relationship with Frederic that she becomes re-traumatized. I will examine not only Catherine's original trauma and how this has affected her later relationship with Frederic but also how the domestic sphere in which Catherine has been placed has had a profound effect on her traumatization. *A Farewell to Arms* can be defined as feminist with Catherine as a feminist character because of her survival through trauma and the linkage Hemingway makes in viewing the domestic sphere as damaging to women. *A Farewell to Arms* differs from *For Whom the Bell Tolls* because the trauma Catherine has experienced is not physical which would be expected because it is war novel. Instead Catherine is emotionally traumatized repeatedly.

Because Catherine is literally a caretaker as a nurse, a large focus on Catherine and Frederic's relationship is her constant care of him. As a nurse, Catherine is responsible for caring for injured men. Because of this, Catherine and Frederic have an unequally structured relationship from the beginning of the novel.. Although not specific to trauma, this is another way in which Hemingway constructs

a strong female character through Catherine. In Frederic's physically handicapped state he entrusts Catherine with his most basic needs. Catherine is an amplified state of power in their relationship in this stage of the novel because she is responsible for Frederic's care. Catherine speaks candidly about her role as caretaker and associates it with the loss of her fiancé. Because Catherine was not able to save her fiancé, she becomes a nurse, and her efforts to care for Frederic can be read as a psychological attempt to recreate that earlier relationship but with a different outcome. Hemingway constructs Catherine's pervasive care for Frederic as the precursor to her residence within the domestic sphere, for it is this eventual caretaking and wife/mother role that re-traumatizes Catherine and leads to her eventual death. A contrast is created between Catherine's typically feminine role as nurse to her obvious disconnect within the domestic sphere. Hemingway is making obvious statements about the power of healing, and it is Catherine Barkley who has the power and ability to heal Frederic. This gendered power dynamic is laid out in Jamie Barlowe's "Hemingway's Gender Training":

Middle class white men like Ernest were forced into male roles as often as girls and women were pressed into conformity to female social roles. In fact, men had far fewer challenges to the constructions of male identity than women did to female identity. The immensity and power of the women's movement offered corroboration that biology did not support the social codes and constructions of the female, and in some cases proved them lies (127).

Barlowe's description of women's power in the early twentieth century helps to explain the power Hemingway gives to his female characters; it is a way to echo his personal beliefs about female strength.

Catherine and Frederic's relationship is negative for Catherine not only because of the caretaking role she is forced to assume but because of the re-traumatization that she experiences through Frederic. Because Catherine has a relationship that closely mirrors that which she had with her dead lover, several emotions surface. Catherine sees Frederic involved in the same violence and danger that her fiancé was involved in. This leads to fear and doubting throughout their relationship. Frederic often makes statements about Catherine's emotional unavailability, stating, for example, "come back from where you've been" (34). Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder or PTSD is internationally recognized as an emotional disorder that manifests in post- violence situations. PTSD can be defined as a mental health condition that's triggered by a terrifying event. Symptoms may include flashbacks, nightmares and severe anxiety, as well as uncontrollable thoughts about the event. (Mayo Clinic, US) This is clearly manifested in Catherine. It isn't until Catherine and Frederic escape the war that some of these fears and trauma starts to dissipate. The only situation in which Catherine is not seen as brave is through her fear of rain. Catherine associates the rain with death, which is another sign of her PTSD. She says to Frederic, "And you'll love me won't you? 'Yes.' 'And the rain won't make any difference?' 'No.' 'That's good" (117). Here her fear of rain is a symptom of the trauma she experienced since she thinks it brings death. Catherine does eventually overcome her fear and thus her trauma with the help of

Frederic and their non-conventional relationship. Similar to *Garden of Eden* and *For Whom the Bell Tolls* the relationship presented follows a non-conventional path. because of Catherine's relationship to death prior to her relationship with Jordan as well as their escape from war. Similarly to *For Whom the Bell Tolls* and *The Garden of Eden* Frederic and Catherine merge identities as well. James R. Mellow writes of this in his book, *Hemingway: A Life Without Consequences*,

"Hemingway seems willing to entertain the notion that love and sex are a merger of sexual identities. Catherine wants Frederic Henry to let his hair grow long while she has hers cut shorter, 'and we'd be just alike only one of us blonde and one of us dark...Oh darling, I want you so much I want to be you too.' Frederic Henry responds, 'You are. We're the same one'" (382).

These non-conventional relationships are what ultimately help the women overcome their past trauma and gain their own independence and agency.

Hemingway makes several statements about the destructive power of the domestic sphere. Catherine has originally experienced trauma in this sphere through the death of her fiancé. Catherine has intense resistance towards marriage and the family following the trauma of this loss. Once involved with Frederic, Catherine speaks frankly about her hesitation toward marriage because of her previous relationship. "What good would it be to marry now" (99), she says. Another example of the danger of the domestic sphere for Catherine and Frederic is through the quote, "Oh, darling, you will be good to me won't you? Because we're going to have a strange life" (327). The sheer fact that Catherine and Frederic are able to

create and sustain a relationship during World War I is the beginning of their non-traditional relationship trajectory. Their love story is unique because they are both struggling with violence and trauma and because of this, they create a non-traditional relationship that is constructed for their needs. Like Maria in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, Catherine and Frederic do not need a traditional marriage as well. "There's no way to be married except by church or state. We are married privately. You see, darling, it would be everything to me if I had any religion. But I haven't any religion. You're all I got" (115). This is an example of the unique relationship that Catherine and Frederic have created. Catherine would have not been able to overcome her trauma if she were forced back into a traditional relationship. In fact, it is when Catherine becomes pregnant that she is forcibly put back into the domestic sphere and she deeply suffers.

A Farewell to Arms combines the violence of World War I and Catherine's caretaking role as a nurse to create a relationship that rebels against traditional relationship paths. Catherine has already been traumatized prior to her relationship with Frederic, and it is through her and Frederic's relationship during World War I that she is able to re-claim her ability to trust and engage in a relationship. Hemingway creates a feminist and strong female character in Catherine not only because of her strength and bravery but because of the extreme cognizance she shows of her own trauma. Catherine not only is able to engage in her relationship with Frederic outside of a traditional role, but she stoically goes through the pregnancy that ultimately kills her. Frederic loses his masculinity while Catherine gains agency. "With the loss of the conviction of masculine invincibility and

authority after the war came a stoic attitude that is compensatory stance for this new awareness of vulnerability” (Wendy Martin 48). Frederic gains a more vulnerable personality while Catherine becomes stoic. Because *A Farewell to Arms* is a war novel it is clear that Hemingway aligns the domestic sphere to death because it is not violence that kills Catherine, it is the forced role of being a mother. Catherine is multiply traumatized throughout the novel and because she is able to overcome these traumas and simultaneously care for Frederic, it is clear that Hemingway desired strong, powerful female characters in this novel and others.

The Wound of Androgyny in *The Garden of Eden*

The Garden of Eden is the differing novel among the three discussed because of its gender play and androgyny. However, it is important to analyze because it has the most complicated gender tensions and binaries. These gender tensions and binaries prove to be the root of trauma in this novel, for it is when the protagonists switch their gender roles that psychological trauma presents itself. The relationships presented within this novel are different from those in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* and *A Farewell to Arms*, but they all fit together because they feature strong female characters. Published in 1986, *The Garden of Eden* is the third posthumously published novel by Ernest Hemingway. Often cited for its content of gender reversal and sexual play, *The Garden of Eden* differs from the Hemingway trope of a damsel in distress as found (at least at first) in *A Farewell to Arms* and *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. Situated besides *A Farewell to Arms* and *For Whom the Bell*

Tolls, The Garden of Eden offers a unique analysis of a female character who is the controller in the relationship, not the victim. *The Garden of Eden* takes place during Catherine and David Bourne's honeymoon abroad. It is during their honeymoon that Catherine approaches David with sexual play situated around their gender reversals at night. As Catherine prods David to take part in these games, he becomes less engaged in their relationship and instead focuses on his writing career, as well as an increased dependency on alcohol. Ultimately Catherine's gender reversal spills over to taint their 'daytime' marriage as well. All of this unravels when Catherine introduces Marita, with whom both fall in love, into their relationship. Marita has a sexual relationship with both partners while Catherine and David continue to grow apart. This finally leads to their implied separation at the close of the novel.

Catherine has a wide range of actions between expected female behavior and shocking gender-reversed activities. Although Catherine's behavior and appearance are all deeply rooted in her desire for androgyny, there are subtle hints throughout the novel that suggest she is a foil to the submissive women characters that Hemingway previously created. This is apparent throughout the novel, as Catherine equally takes part in all of David's activities such as drinking, fishing, and sunbathing. There is no separation between what David is doing and what Catherine is doing. While on their honeymoon, David and Catherine eat, drink, and fish together. Even Catherine's eating habits lead the reader to believe that in her non-gender reversed state, Catherine is not stereotypically feminine. "They were always hungry but they ate very well. They were always so hungry for breakfast that the girl often had a headache until the coffee came. She took her coffee without sugar

and the young man was learning to remember that" (4). Hemingway makes it clear well before Catherine's desires to assume a male identity are known, that she is neither delicate nor feminine. This loss of femininity is inherently connected to a loss of submissiveness as well, for the boldness of Catherine Bourne's character is sharply contrasted with both Catherine Barkley and Maria, who are perceived as submissive to their partners, not as equals or superior. When Robert Jordan first meets Maria, it is because she has served him his dinner, "She picked up the iron plate they had eaten from and the four forks. She moved awkwardly as a colt moves, but with that same grace as of a young animal" (31). Catherine and Maria literally tend to their male partners, while Catherine Bourne creates a wound in David by introducing androgyny. Through the progression of the novel, David speaks clearly about his desire to go back to their early relationship. Catherine has no qualms about her behavior and even states to David, "I'm the destructive type, and I'm going to destroy you" (5). Catherine's aggression, as represented through this quote, is another example of her non-feminine behavior. Through Catherine's assumption of a male identity, she controls both the sexual and emotional state of her marriage with David. This ultimately leads to the prediction that Catherine will destroy David; however, this does not come to fruition as the destruction of their marriage (and David's writing) are what occurs instead. *The Garden of Eden* thus also exemplifies the trauma of both Catherine and David. David suffers from the androgynous wound created by Catherine which leads to this ultimate destruction. As Mark Spilka states, "The only way left for David to assert and reclaim his male identity is through the act of writing itself; it is there that he overcomes what seems to be the

wound of androgyny. Thus when Catherine destroys the African manuscripts [which David is writing], David is able to reassert that identity and to overcome the corrupting effects of the androgynous wounding, by writing them again" (335).

Catherine is also a break from the normative female Hemingway character insofar she is not concerned with appearance, even apart from when she is assuming a male identity. Catherine does not dress in a feminine manner, and instead wears the same clothes that her husband David wears. "People did not wear fishermen's shirts then and this girl that he was married to was the first girl he had ever seen wearing one. She had bought the shirts for them" (6). This exemplifies not only that Catherine is not concerned with her outward appearance, but also that she considers David and herself as gender equals. This is the clearest example of Catherine's departure from other women characters in Hemingway novels, for Catherine is not tied to a domestic or feminine ideal. Hemingway chose to create a strong female character that doesn't need beauty ideologies to sustain her sense of self. Instead, Catherine's identity is tied to her gender-identity which is in a constant state of flux throughout the novel.

Catherine Bourne's most unique attribute in *The Garden of Eden* is her desire for androgyny and gender role-playing. Androgyny is defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary* as: "partly male and partly female in appearance; of indeterminate sex." Catherine's desire for androgyny shows the evolution of Catherine as a woman who adopts a male identity, as well as the destruction of Catherine and David's marriage. It clearly cuts a dividing line between what was experienced before and after

Catherine's proposal to David that they switch gender. However, through my description of Catherine's behavior and appearance in conjunction with her sexual role play with David, it is obvious that she had a longing to assume a man's identity. Just as there is a division between what occurred before and after David and Catherine's gender reversal, there is a division created between the night-time relationship and the day-time relationship between the pair. In the beginning of their arrangement, Catherine is careful to proposition David only at night. However, as this relationship progresses, Catherine becomes increasingly masculine during the day. This includes the continual shortening of her short hair, as well as protesting against female-identified language. "Dave, you don't mind if we've gone to the devil, do you?" "No, girl", he said. "Don't call me girl" (17). However what is not clearly delineated in *The Garden of Eden* are the identities of Catherine and David. Because both characters dress the same, have the same haircuts, and engage in the same relationships and activities, it becomes unclear which identity is uniquely tied to each person. The reversal of David and Catherine complicates the novel immensely. "[That] Catherine's and David's transformations involve more than a simple reversal of the heterosexual union is configured in the directions Catherine gives David for making the change. Entreating him to love and understand her, Catherine asks David to change like the sculpture in the Rodin museum" (Debra Modellmog 69). This separates Catherine Bourne from Catherine Barkley and Maria because their relationships are distinctly separated between their genders. Catherine Barkley is defined by her occupation as a nurse, the loss of her fiancé, and her fatal pregnancy, all female-identified experiences. Maria is scarred from her

encounter with sexual violence and her loss of hair. Her fear makes clear that these are female-only experiences. However, because both Catherine and David have sex with women, drink, fish, and eat the same food, Catherine Bourne cannot be isolated as a feminine-only character with distinct traits. Because Catherine Bourne's female identity is drastically different from that of Catherine Barkley, their experiences and trauma differ as well.

Catherine's trauma in *The Garden of Eden* also sets her apart from Catherine Barkley and Maria. Catherine Barkley and Maria escape their early traumas by entering into relationships with the male protagonists. Catherine Bourne's trauma, however, results from David's reaction to her sexual preferences. As Catherine becomes more and more invested in her gender-reversal, David pulls away from her and their marriage. It is David's refusal of Catherine's requests and his subsequent separation that traumatize Catherine. According to Dr. Judith Herman in *Trauma and Recovery*, the kind of trauma that Catherine experiences with David is recognized as a disconnection. "A secure sense of connection with caring people is the foundation of personality development. When this connection is shattered, the traumatized person loses her basic sense of self. Developmental conflicts of childhood and adolescence, long since resolved, are suddenly reopened. Trauma forces the survivor to relive all her earlier struggles over autonomy, initiative, competence, identity, and intimacy" (52). The shadow of trauma is apparent in Catherine as she requires an increased amount of approval from David, and profusely apologizes for her behavior at night. Not only does David's doubt re-traumatize Catherine, it causes a feeling of shame in her as well which only furthers

her loss of self. This is apparent in the novel, “ ‘Don’t worry, David, I’m your good girl come back again.’

“But he was very worried now and he thought what will become of us if things have gone this wildly and this dangerously and this fast?” (18). The theory that this is a re-opened trauma that stems from childhood could apply to Catherine as well because of the loss of her parents in a car accident, which likely affected her sense of connection. Therefore Catherine experiences trauma as disconnection in terms of abandonment. Catherine possibly felt abandoned by her parents which only intensifies after David abandons her sexual requests as well as eventually abandons her and their marriage. Catherine consistently asks David to forget the ordeal, “ ‘I’m over it,’ Catherine said. ‘I’m not going to act that way. Why should I act that way to you? It was ludicrous and undignified. It was so silly I won’t even ask you to forgive me’ ” (70). Because of David’s shaming of Catherine, for example telling her to be his good girl, he causes a trauma in her sense of self regarding her sexual and gender identity. “ ‘Nobody knows. I tell you so when you’re my girl. It’s not that you’re insatiable. I’m satiable so easily. It’s just some feel and other’s don’t. People lie about it I think. But it’s so nice just to feel and hold you. I’m so happy. Just be my girl and love me the way I love you. Love me more. The way you can now. You now. Yes you. Please you’ ” (86). David is clearly resistant to Catherine’s transition which is the source of her trauma.

Conclusion

In these three novels, the female characters have undergone several traumas and reconstructions. Because of these women's survival of their traumas it is clear that Hemingway created resilient female characters that are not in conjunction with the misogyny that some have attributed to him. Although each woman's trauma is unique (sexual assault, death, domesticity, and the rejection of an androgynous desire), they all relate to the theme of women's power through survival and trauma. To fully appreciate these novels in a modern context, they must be considered in the historical context in which they were written, for this is another important characteristic in these novels: appreciation of feminism. Specifically the war novels, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, and *A Farewell to Arms*, confine their female characters within the political struggles occurring during that time. The pairing between the historical and survival of trauma has a very powerful effect at the close of each novels. Catherine Barkley, dies while giving childbirth, proving Hemingway's point about the danger of domesticity. Catherine Bourne realizes her sexual desire and needs although her marriage becomes collateral. Finally, Maria is able to overcome the trauma of her rape through her relationship with Robert Jordan. All of these three endings prove equally important to the strength and power Hemingway provides his female characters.

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